



District Continues to Make Community Splash!

During the past few months, the South Florida Water Management District has made a splash in several communities, sponsoring and participating in community outreach or educational events from Orlando to Key West. Here's a sprinkling of a few:

Leadership Legends and Kissimmee Rhythm & Blues Festival

Out and about in Orlando, District staff gave airboat tours of Lake Tohopekaliga and explained the flood control system during tours of the S-61 flood control structure as part of the February 18 Leadership Legends event for retired citizens. Staff also used the Enviroscape Wetlands Model, an interactive tool, to demonstrate the cleaning abilities of wetlands at the Kissimmee Rhythm and Blues Festival on February 29. This event is an annual fundraiser for the Kissimmee/Osceola Chamber of Commerce's Black Business Council.

IRCC Chemistry/Biology Lab Dedication

Indian River Community College dedicated the South Florida Water Management District chemistry/biology lab in recognition of the agency's support of the



Wolf High-Technology Center located on the college's Chastain campus on February 24. The District provided support for the development of new environmental science programs as well as the advanced technology needed to field test and map environmentally sensitive lands.

We Love Naples Bay Day

People proclaim their feelings for their sweeties on February 14, and Naples is no different. More than 200 citizens showed their love during "We Love Naples Bay Day" in Cambier Park, which celebrated the District's sponsorship of Naples Bay research and water quality monitoring. Oakridge Middle School received water quality testing kits as part of the sponsorship, as did event attendees. Elected officials and experts gave short speeches about the bay, its problems, and the solutions that are in the works. Musicians, hands-on exhibits, and free boat rides on the bay were all a part of the event.

Lake Okeechobee Field Trip

In March, the District hosted the Jupiter Environmental Academy on its annual field trips for students to Lake Okeechobee. District staff provided an overview lecture and answered questions the students had about current restoration activities.

Gators Galore

Have you seen Freddy's cousins around Palm Beach County? As part of a community-wide initiative, the District sponsored one of 70 life-size fiberglass alligator sculptures placed around Palm



Beach County during a 12-week public art display (January 16 to March 31). The alligators will be auctioned off on April 4 to benefit the Boys & Girls Clubs of Palm Beach County and the Armory Art Center.

Indian River Lagoon Envirothon

More than 120 students from four counties participated in this yearly District-sponsored competition between high school students February 27. Subject areas included aquatics, forestry, soils and wildlife in the Indian River Lagoon. The winner from each county will take part in the State Envirothon scheduled for May 1.

Little River Day

On January 31, people of all ages cleaned up a mile stretch of Little River Canal and its banks in the Oakland Grove Neighborhood and Village of El Portal in Miami. Neighborhood children rode in canoes to pick up floating trash, while learning the history of Little River. District staff explained the S-27 spillway structure



and its purpose to volunteers as they removed items such as shopping carts, bicycles, drums and bottles from the canal banks. Little River is home to many aquatic and rare species that now have a clean habitat thanks to local volunteers!

Speckled Perch Festival & Rodeo

The District routinely participates in the annual Speckled Perch Festival in the Lake Okeechobee with a booth in the park where children are branded with Freddy tattoos. Freddy is also in the festival parade. Focusing on partnerships this year, the District shared a booth with the Corps of Engineers and offered information about both agencies' recreational opportunities.

Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center

Get ready to welcome the Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center in Key West, a 6,000-square-foot educational facility. To educate the public about the connection between the Keys, the greater Kissimmee-Lake Okeechobee- Everglades ecosystem and southern Florida restoration initiatives, the District is assisting with the design of a large (7 foot diameter), multidimensional globe that will show ecological and hydrological linkages.

Everglades Day

U.S. Senator Bob Graham spent his 396th workday at the February 14 Everglades Festival at the Loxahatchee National



Wildlife Refuge. District staff and Freddy rolled up their sleeves as well, leading tours around the Strazzulla Marsh and Loxahatchee Impoundment Landscape Assessment projects, quizzing the young refuge visitors on their Everglades knowledge, and distributing information about the District's public lands and recreation activities.

Youth Leadership Broward's Environmental Day

Youth Leadership Broward's "History, Urban & Environment Day" enhanced



students' knowledge about the county's history, educated them on environmental issues, and provided them with leadership skills to get involved in making improvements in their community. As co-sponsors of the February 10 event, District staff accompanied 55 high school juniors on an airboat tour while explaining Everglades restoration and current water pollution issues affecting the water conservation areas in Broward County.



Freddy Travels Florida

Where in Florida is Freddy? Most likely he's at one of the many events throughout the District, including southwest

Florida. Between the months of January and March, Freddy made 51 appearances including Charlotte Harbor Nature Festival in Port Charlotte, the Swamp Cabbage Festival in LaBelle, the 2004 Fiesta in Immokalee in eastern Collier County and the Caloosahatchee River Basin Festival in Fort Myers on March 13. Taking a break from his tour of the southwester part of the state, Freddy visited downtown Orlando to entertain children and promote water conservation for attendees at the *Ahora Orlando* magazine's anniversary celebration in February.

Epcot Garden Fest Focuses on Water Conservation

Epcot at Walt Disney World in Orlando explodes with color each spring as the International Flower and Garden Festival transforms the park to attract green-thumbed guests from across the planet.

Among the guests are backyard gardeners eager to take home landscaping ideas, and that's why the South Florida Water Management District will be there with a message of conservation and environmentally friendly gardening.

Working in partnership with RainBird, irrigation and water conservation experts will staff the festival's main garden and offer a message of water conservation and "the right plant in the right place." The International Flower and Garden Festival runs from April 16 through June 6.

Bordered by a running river fed by a spring boil, the garden will offer guests with a relaxing hideaway and tips on the newest low-flow irrigation technology, water conservation information, the problems created by invasive exotic vegetation and the beauty and environmental benefits of cultivating native foliage.